

Alta Resources

Navigating Through the Digital Transformation Era

How AI is Driving the Future of Voice
Technology in the Contact Center Space
and How to Take the Wheel

alta

Navigating Through the Digital Transformation Era

How AI is Driving the Future of Voice Technology in the Contact Center Space and How to Take The Wheel

In its simplest form, contact centers exist to maximize perceptions of the brands that consumers interact with. At the end of the day, contact centers have one objective: to provide consumers with positive experiences so they become, stay, or grow as customers over the long haul. Historically, one of the few ways consumers came in contact with a brand after a sale was via the phone, whereas today consumers have endless direct and indirect methods to start a conversation with their favorite brands--email, social media, chat, and more. While the way the customer experience is delivered has changed throughout the years, one thing remains the same: satisfaction matters, and it is more achievable than ever.

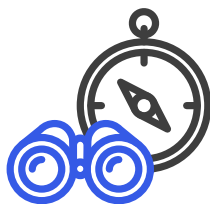
Moving At the Speed of Technology

In the last ten years or so, technology has been growing at a more rapid pace than ever. The ever-evolving technology has benefited both consumers and brands alike, however, with every opportunity comes its share of challenges. In this case, tech may be evolving faster than some companies can keep up. It's easy to feel like you're falling behind if you're not constantly moving forward at the same lightning speed. No industry is immune to the evolution, and the contact center space certainly has its own story of how things like big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning have made their mark on the industry--mostly for better. Let's be honest; we've all experienced the automated call or chatbot where we wanted to scream "Representative!" at the top of our lungs, get off the robot merry-go-round and reach a human. Experiences like that have cast a shadow on the vast capabilities of artificial intelligence, when innovators and early adopters in the industry raced to the marketplace to use autonomous bots to handle customer contacts because they could (not that they should have...yet).

Wait, Hold the Phone...

And while the tech train has come barreling down the track at jet speed, the world came to an abrupt halt in March of 2020 when the vast majority of the world's workforce was sent home to work in the seclusion of their own walls. Companies rushed to adapt to this new protocol, jumping onto the cloud if they weren't there already, retrofitting themselves into a near-entire virtual model of working where a physical footprint was the norm just days before. As we all fumbled around in this brave new world trying to find our footing, millions of people found themselves contemplating their careers and redefining their values. What has now been dubbed The Great Resignation swept the country as people changed, or in some cases, left, their careers entirely. This resulted in organizations around the globe facing an unprecedented workforce labor shortage, scrambling to find new ways to recruit and retain valuable employees or run leaner.

No matter how we slice it or what color we paint it, when we look at where we are from a 10,000-foot view, we can no doubt recognize we're at a pivotal time in our industry's history; one that has created vast opportunities for growth. That is, if you can look beyond the challenges that have gotten us here. We, for one, are excited about the outlook of the future of the contact center space and how voice technology is playing an integral role in that.



The Challenges of Voice Technology in Particular

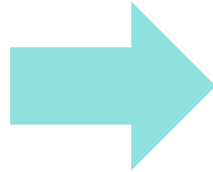
Voice technology remains the oldest and largest communication channel in the contact industry. It's also the most complex, given its real-time nature and pseudo in-person interaction, in contrast to written communication methods.

If your company utilizes voice technology for customer contacts, you'll no doubt recognize these common contact center challenges:

Complex systems

Manual data entry

Labor shortage



Poor customer experience

Poor perception of AI based on past experience, long pauses, high effort

Poor agent experience

Excessive training, excessive in-call tasks, occasional in-call overwhelm

Management challenges

Costly, room for manual data entry error, excessive training time, unclear managerial ownership (whose responsibility is it—CC Managers or IT?)

Arguably the Greatest Challenge of All

While these challenges can create painful headaches for a lot of companies, there's one additional challenge that merits special attention: **a lack of AI knowledge.**

The trouble with not understanding AI and how AI fits in the contact center space is it inhibits growth and innovation. Decision makers who are unsure about AI tend to drag their feet too long or make hasty, uneducated decisions about which solutions to procure, because they don't know what they don't know. "Off-the-shelf" bots are attention-grabbing, but some companies have been susceptible to spending small fortunes on software-as-a-service solutions, only to discover that they've never been tested on customer call situations, or use cases, like theirs.



So, what is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the use of smart technology to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence and operations. For example, email spam filters, bank autopay, and YouTube video recommendations, based on what you previously watched are all examples of AI technology that automates an otherwise manual task.

Think about Siri and Alexa, for example. They are able to interact with you, answer your questions, provide directions, and perform tasks—all by having a conversation with you. This specific type of AI is aptly called “conversational AI.”

The fact of the matter is, AI is all around us, and we utilize it almost every day whether we’re aware of it or not.

How does AI play a role in the contact center space, specifically with voice technology?

Companies like yours can optimize the voice channel by utilizing AI to drive efficiencies and reduce costs, as well as improve the customer and agent experience. By transforming to a “smart” contact center, you can manage your contact center with confidence and an optimistic view of the future of your customer care. Companies have already reported countless victories, including:

Customer experience

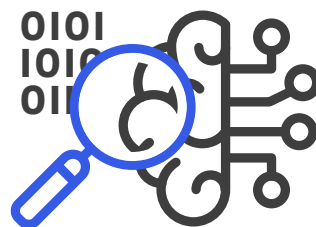
- No more long, awkward pauses while agent types & searches for info
- Higher CX scores

Employee experience

- Empowered agents can actively engage in conversations
- Less overwhelm
- Lower attrition

Program efficiencies & performance

- Lower average handle time
- Less employee training time
- Increased time to proficiency for new hires
- More accurate data/fewer data entry errors
- Streamlined downstream processes
- Ability to leverage rich, real-time data from voice interactions
- Improved data analytics



How do I get started?

You might be asking yourself by now what steps you can take toward determining if, how, and when to integrate AI into your customer care strategy. If that's you, here are a few helpful hints to find the path to AI that works best for you.

Determine your objective.

When it comes to companies who transform their digital footprint, common objectives are generally centered around one or more of the following areas:

- **Customers:** Improving customer satisfaction and net promoter scores
- **Agents:** Improving agent experience and minimizing real-time, manual tasks
- **Operations:** Streamlining the technology landscape and integrating operational tasks
- **Financials:** Improving the bottom line, decreasing expenses, increasing profits

Get as specific as you can about what you want to accomplish. Is there a particular problem you're trying to solve? The more detailed you can spell that out, the better AI, specifically conversational AI, can work to your advantage.

Start simple.

We likely all have our own horror story of a bad automated experience; maybe it happened to you directly; maybe your company even provided that experience to your own customers before anyone knew any better. More often than not, those situations were a direct result of companies trying to bite off more than they could chew with technology they didn't yet grasp, expecting it to take on superhuman qualities and make decisions on its own.

That doesn't have to be you. The trick is to start by giving your AI simple tasks. The immediate value compounds like a snowball effect—it starts small, rolls forward, and the impact grows continuously. At Alta, we break this into three phases: **pilot, learn, enhance.**

Look at your challenge and solution from your customers' POV.

Always prioritize customer experience when deciding what your bot should handle on its own. Ultimately, customers want low-effort experiences, and if agents aren't empowered with automated conversational AI capabilities, it will become more and more obvious to the customer as time goes on. So, leverage automation where possible and keep the agent focused on providing a timely and on-point resolution to the customer.



Still feeling stuck?

Navigating the AI-verse can be tricky. There's no one-size-fits-all answer; every organization is made up of unique products, customers, employees, and technology. Fortunately, Alta's AI team is equipped to help you set your path forward.

Our business is customer care, not software-as-a-service. So, when it comes to voice-driven technology, we focus on 'applied innovation.' Without customer satisfaction as the #1 priority, technology is just technology, not a tech solution.

Simply put, we put a lot of care into our customer care, and that's why **autoMate** is designed to enhance customer care for our clients and has been tested and proven over and over again. To assist you in navigating your own AI implementation, we've developed a comprehensive evaluation that looks at:

- Where you are
- Where you want to go
- What it will take to get you to your goal
- What steps you can take for immediate, low-effort results

Two-pronged Evaluation & Action Plan

1. Use case discovery

Our team will assess your unique customer care routines and processes to determine where appropriate automation can exist in the short- and long-term, allowing agents to better focus on the conversation, and the customer to feel valued.

2. Tech landscape & integration requirements

We'll help you determine if you're equipped to fully integrate AI right now or if you should start with some basic prerequisites to set yourself up for your best success.



Interested in a consult?

Contact Pat Nicholson to schedule your individualized assessment.

Patrick J. Nicholson
Vice President, Sales Operations & Business Development

M 920 284 4224
patnic@altaresources.com

Why Alta?

Alta is proud to be continuously recognized by Gallup for our employee engagement success, and coupled with our AI solutions, we've been able to make the agent's workload more efficient, which reduces handle time and the number of employees needed for each client.

Our agents are specifically trained in our COMPASS™ sales approach, which equips them with the training and tools to be able to transform a care call into an up-sell or cross-sell opportunity. With this approach, our clients' care services have successfully transitioned from a cost center to a profit center.



Contact

Patrick J. Nicholson
Vice President, Sales Operations
& Business Development

M 920 284 4224
patnic@altaresources.com



To learn more about Alta Resources, go to altaresources.com